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Evaluation of the employees' engagement factors importance methodology including generation Y

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement has a major impact on both, staff performance and overall organisation performance. Factors affecting the level of engagement vary depending on the age of the workers. These differences should be recognised by the organisation and taken into account when increasing workers' engagement. Aim of this article is to introduce a new way how to evaluate the importance of employees' engagement factors including also generation Y and provide the results of practical implementation of pilot research. The methods used to fulfil the aim were the modification and addition of already existing engagement model, which, however, does not reflect the differences of young employees on the labour market, and also Saaty's method of determining weights. To fulfil the objectives, the authors have executed a survey by using the written questionnaire on a sample size of 664 respondents. Main outputs of the article include proposal of adjusted engagement model, questionnaire used to evaluate the importance of engagement's factors and pilot practical application of evaluating the engagement's factors of employees in a selected company.

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1. Introduction

Currently, the employees' engagement, which Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzáles-Romá and Bakker (2002) describes as positive work attitude, which results in an increased level of activation and identification with the organisation's goals (leading to a positive impact on the worker's work effort), is considered as one of the main issues regarding functioning of all organisations that is not only of those in developed economies. Gradually, this issue is starting to be important even in transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic. Managerial and HR managers' interest in this issue is growing as organisations start to realise that, although they have many sophisticated data to understand the needs and wishes of

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their customers, they have very little information about what is important to their staff, what motivates them and what approaches could help to improve their work performance. In this sense, it is beneficial to take into account the possible occurrence of cognitive distortions (Frankovský, Birknerová, & Zbihlejšová, 2016).

In the current global business environment, it becomes clear that just satisfaction and stability, and even loyalty and a degree of devotion, are not enough to secure the desired relationship between performance and positive business results. It seems, that as a condition for a well-functioning organisation, it is important to have truly and fully committed staff. Social intelligence of a manager plays an important role in this context (Frankovský, Zbihlejšová, & Birknerová, 2015).

In order to verify this fact, i.e. to determine the impact of employees' engagement on the organisation's functioning, several studies have been conducted. Among the most significant is the research supported by the British Government, the output of which is a report on the impact of employee engagement on improving the performance of the organisation. Research, supported by the world-known Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), and has demonstrated how significant engagement is for performance, profit, productivity, customer service, retention, less conflicts, innovation, lower number of leaving employees, their lower sickness rate and wellbeing. According to this study, engagement depends on the three following basics: (1) it is measurable, (2) it can be correlated with performance, and (3) it varies from poor to great. Most importantly employers can do a great deal to have an impact on people's level of engagement. That is what makes it so important, as a tool for business success (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009).

(1) When it comes to the measurability, engagement is most often measured, for example, by sociological or socio-psychological research and motivation or engagement surveys (questionnaire, interview) that are based on a set of precisely targeted questions for workers. Additional content methods such as document analysis, observation, or experiment can be used as complementary methods. Among the questionnaires, which are used for current level of engagement, are most often used existing questionnaire of companies such as: *Gallup*, *Mercer*, *Towers Watson*, *Aon Hewitt*, *CIPD*, *Dell*, *Caterpollar* or questionnaire *UWES*. For example, the questionnaire about work and life balance *UWES – Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* measures three factors (categories) of engagement – vigor, dedication and absorption, through certain statements. The result of the questionnaire evaluation is to obtain three sub-values (arithmetic mean) for three factors (category) and one overall value; their amount, which can range from 0 to 6, then indicates the level of engagement found. The *Gallup* questionnaire, *The Gallup Workplace Audit (Gallup Q12)*, is then composed of 12 questions about how employees perceive their work and their working environment; these questions can predict the engagement and performance of individuals and groups and their interdependence with the organisation's outputs. For every question answered, the respondents respond to the degree of their consent in degrees from 'totally disagree' (1) to 'totally agree' (5); there is also the possibility of the sixth answer 'don't know, doesn't pertain to me'. By assigning a specific value – number, the results can be statistically evaluated and measured (Horváthová, Bláha, & Čopíková, 2016).

(2) As far as correlation with performance, there is evidence that improving engagement correlates with improving performance. In 2012, *Gallup* examined 49 publicly traded companies with earnings per share data available from 2008 to 2012. This study found that businesses with a critical mass of engaged employees outperformed their competition. Companies with an average of 9.3 engaged employees for every actively disengaged employee in 2010–2011 experienced 147% higher earnings per share compared with their competition in 2011–2012. Companies with an average of 2.6 engaged employees for every actively disengaged employee, in contrast, experienced 2% lower earnings per share compared with their competition during that same time period (Sorenson, 2013).

(3) In terms of engagement levels, there is a wide variation in this area within organisations and companies, and between them. For example, in United Kingdom, the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) in its quantitative research named *Driving Performance and Retention Through Employee Engagement* report that the highest scoring companies record 23.8 per cent of their people in the high engaged category; in the lowest scoring companies only 2.9 per cent of their people are in the highly engaged category, using the same measurement techniques (CLC, 2004).

Another major engagement work is the *Shaping the Future* research project implemented by CIPD in 2009 and 2010, the main objective was to assess the engagement factors that enable organisations to function well in the short run as well as to maintain their performance over a longer period of time and even in more difficult economic times (CIPD, 2011a). The key findings of the project in its final report, entitled *Sustainable Organisation Performance. What Really Make The Difference?* is the fact that engagement is one of the four areas that make it possible to achieve permanent (sustainable) organisation performance. The remaining three areas are support, agility and shared goal, talent and metrics and performance metrics (CIPD, 2011b).

Not only the aforementioned research but also many other studies show that engagement has a direct impact on both, the performance of employees and the performance of the organisation and hence, its financial results. Organisations should, therefore, engage in the concept of engagement, they should be able to measure the level of engagement of their employees and use different tools to support their growth. The issue of specific tools to support the growth of employee engagement, the so-called engagement factors, was then addressed in a number of companies, e.g. CIPD, Hay Group, Aon Hewitt, Gallup, Towers Watson, IES (see chapter 3), či Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) nebo Mercer. These researches and studies showed that factors of engagement include especially the strength of their relationships with supervisors and co-workers, as well as their belief in their own ability to perform their jobs effectively and contribute to their organisation. Other findings show that maintaining high levels of employee engagement is viewed as a significant challenge among HR professionals and executives. Specifically, the areas that influence engagement include behaviour of manager and senior executive team towards the employees, compensation, benefits, onboarding, day-to-day work, learning and development and organisational culture (CLC, 2004; SHRM, 2016). On the other hand, the factors that hinder the growth of

engagement include, in particular, bureaucratic behaviour in the organisation and excessive workload (Mercer, 2011).

It has to be emphasised that none of these researches included the specifications of Generation Y, who are people born between the years 1982 to 1995, and who currently influence the dynamics of labour market the most and also who will soon represent the dominant part of the labour market (Del Campo, 2011; Matusiková, 2011). According to the study of *Brookings Company* called *How Millennials Could Upend Wall Street and Corporate America*, representatives of this generation will account for about 75% of the global workforce in 2025 (Donston-Miller, 2016). This generation differs from previous generations, not only in relation to work, to money, to information technology, etc., but also to the engagement factors that affect this generation of workers. As stated by Zaniboni, Truxillo, and Fraccaroli (2013) and James, Mckechnie, and Swanberg (2011), several studies have shown that age diversity affects factors that affect employee engagement and that these differences need to be considered. Also Robinson, Fletcher, and Hughes (2013) found that engagement in organisations varied between age groups, between the type of organisation and between different job roles.

Based on these statements about the influence of age on exposure and individual factors of exposure is formulated first scientific hypothesis that the authors will attempt to confirm or reject during their research – Hypothesis 1: The assessment of the importance of groups of exposure factors and individual exposure factors (within given groups) differs for the generations Y and X. Based on the fact that none of the past research has been concerned with the exposure factors that are relevant to the Y generation as prevailing labour force in the future, is formulated second scientific hypothesis that the authors will attempt to confirm or reject during their research – Hypothesis 2: Generation Y will consider, as opposed to Generation X, more important those factors that were added as specific for Generation Y (see chapter 3.1).

In summary, the purpose of the research and contributions of the article is analysis of the specifics of Generation Y in the engagement area, which has none of the past researches in the area of engagement paid attention to.

Aim of this article is to introduce new way how to evaluate the importance of employees' engagement factors including also generation Y and provide the results of practical implementation within the company in the Czech Republic as a case study. As one research method selected by the authors of this article in order to fulfil the article objectives was the improvement of existing model (structured to engagement factor's groups, which were further structured to individual engagement factors) and that has been done by adding additional factors specifics for generation Y; as a second method has been used the Saaty's method of determining weights. The tool used by the authors to reach the objectives was the execution of a survey by using a written questionnaire on a sample size of 664 respondents.

The article structure corresponds to the requirements to fulfil determined objectives of the article, where individual chapters represents partial outputs leading to the fulfilment of given objective. In chapter 1 – Introduction is mentioned the specification of the theme, i.e. the reason for the need of investigation and motivation, the most important researches on the topic are mentioned, 2 scientific hypotheses are

formulated, the aim and the contribution of the article is explained and used methods are briefly described. Chapter 2 – Basic concepts is devoted to the definition of basic terms and concepts – motivation, commitment, engagement and their mutual relationship and engaged workers. In chapter 3 – Problem definition and methodology the problem is defined – what engagement factors should be selected to endorse the engagement growth of employees including also Generation Y. There is also described the methods used to fulfil the article objective in detail, that is the choice and way of improving the existing *The Aon Hewit Engagement Model* and a questionnaire based on it as a tool to conduct research, and the nature of using Saaty's method of determining weights. Chapter 4 – Results: the case of Czech company mentions the results of executed research, where as a case study was used a company in the Czech Republic. All the results for the largest group of employees aged 24–37 (generation Y) and summary results for the second largest group of employees aged 38–54 (generation X) are described. In chapter 5 – Discussion results of research are explained more in details, in connection with this are then accepted or rejected scientific hypotheses and some general conclusions are formulated; in the last part of this chapter is discussed the responsibilities for ensuring the employees engagement growth. Chapter 6 – Conclusion, then summarised the basic idea, methods and article objectives, mentions the limitations of executed research and also provides suggestions for future research in this area.

2. Basic concepts – motivation, commitment, engagement and engaged workers

Clearly defining the terms engagement, commitment, motivation and finding links between these concepts is not easy. They are usually considered to be complementary processes; they are interconnected and can be even mutually overlapping. But they can also be distinguished (Armstrong, 2012; Minářová, 2018). Engagement involves people and their work, commitment to identify the worker with the goals and values of the organisation, his/her desire to belong to the organisation and willingness in his/her interest to make efforts. Motivation occurs when workers have well-defined goals and are taking steps to achieve these goals (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017; Zientara & Kuczyński, 2014). Engagement and commitment are the states of being. This is motivation as well, but it is more dynamic. Motivation concerns the desire to do something and then do it. Engagement, commitment are broader terms that characterise a range of behaviours that are desirable from an organisation perspective (Armstrong, 2012).

Motivation refers to factors that affect people to behave in a certain way. Well motivated individuals are mostly people who have clearly defined goals and take steps that they expect to achieve these goals. Such people can be motivated by themselves. This inner form of motivation is the best form of motivation, but only if the steps are going in the right direction to achieve what they want to achieve. Many people are not sufficiently internally motivated based on their motives, so they need to be motivated to a greater or lesser degree from the outside through incentives (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017). Work motivation then explains the motivation of

individuals to work. The theme of motivation is significant wherever performance is concerned (Horváthová et al., 2016).

Commitment is most often explained as a worker's commitment, belonging to an organisation, his/her desire to belong to an organisation, and his/her willingness to make an effort in its interest. (Armstrong, 2010; Bláha et al., 2013). It is a concept that characterises a relationship between an employee and an employer of organisation, characterised by three characteristics: (1) a strong desire to remain a member of its organisation, (2) a willingness to make significant efforts in favour of that organisation, and (3) trust in the goals and values of its organisation (Cohen, 2007). Commitment to an organisation (or also organisational commitment) is a concept that expresses the attitude of workers to the organisation and the employer, emphasizing the internal commitment of workers to the organisation, which leads to preferring the interest of the organisation over the interests of the employees. Devotion consists of three components: affective commitment that reflects the extent to which an employee wants to be in an organisation, continuance commitment that relates to the need of work for the organisation (this need is due to fear of losing the benefits connected with a leaving the organisation or a difficulty finding employment in another organisation) and normative commitment, which expresses the extent to which the worker feels his/her duty to remain in the organisation (Bláha et al., 2013).

Employee engagement is a relatively new concept, its origins date back to around 2000. There are several definitions of this concept. Engagement, for example, means that workers are interested in their work, have a positive relationship with them and are ready to give extraordinary performance, to do their job best. In other words, people who like their work are willing to give 'something more' to the organisation, not because it is required, but since they have their own conviction and joy (Bláha et al., 2013). Employee engagement refers to their attachment to organisation or identification with the organisation as a whole (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017). Engagement can be understood as a mechanism that enables the performance of individuals and the whole organisation (Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, & Delbridge, 2013). It concerns people and their work. Engagement takes place when people engage in their work and are interested in approaching it positively and with enthusiasm or they are even excited from their work and they are ready to make voluntary efforts to do their work (Armstrong, 2012; Armstrong & Taylor, 2017). A study called *Happiness at Work Research* conducted by *Chiumento* in 2007 describes engagement as a positive, bilateral relationship between worker and organisation. Engaged workers who are committed to the organisations will do something extra for each other because they see investing in their relationship as a mutually beneficial thing (Chiumento, 2007). In social exchange, engagement workers understand engagement as a value they provide to their good employer (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017).

Engagement occurs when people are dedicated to their work. They are interested in what they do, and it really excites them. Increasing engagement at work begins by creating job tasks and jobs or creating work roles (Armstrong, 2009). All this is aimed at ensuring the interest and impetus, diversity, autonomy, integrity and materiality of the task, opportunities for training and development, and providing feedback on performance. All these factors are influenced by the structure of the organisation,

the system of work and the quality of leadership (Armstrong, 2009; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011).

Engagement can be explained by four questions: 1. Do you know what to do? (a clear role). 2. Do you know how to do it? (training and experience). 3. Do you have necessary resources for what you need to do? (money, material, time, people). 4. Do you want to do it? (motivation). Positive answer to all the questions shows engagement (Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2010). Most authors agree on a positive view of the importance of employee engagement. According to these experts, engagement has a positive impact on the growth of customer satisfaction, which leads to an increase in the profitability or efficiency of the organisation (Armstrong, 2012; McGee & Rennie, 2011; Spik & Klinecicz, 2008). That is why it is important to pay close attention to engagement.

Engaged workers are described as those who 'dived' into their work; they have a high energy and effective connection with their work. Employee engagement is associated with their high work performance, higher probability of promotion, high labour morale, reduced absence and low exit rates (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Conversely, unskilled workers are more likely to perform poorly, they will not have good working relationships, and their working behaviour will be counterproductive (Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2010).

Engaged employee can be described as someone who is aware of the business and business context and, for the benefit of the organisation, cooperates with colleagues in improving their performance (Bevan, 1997). A committed worker is a person who has a positive attitude to his/her work, believes in it and identifies with the organisation, actively seeks to do better, thinks about his/her work and seeks to improve it, actively uses the opportunity to discuss working issues with colleagues and improving, working with others, and helping colleagues work more efficiently, is reliable and goes beyond the demands of his/her work, sees a wider context, sometimes even at its own expense, keeps an eye on the latest approaches and processes and seeks and provides opportunities to improve organisation's performance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017; Jackson, Schuler, & Werner, 2009).

It might seem that a workforce composed of employees who are committed and sufficiently motivated by the organisation is a desirable and optimal state for the organisation. However, as aforementioned, in the current global business environment, it is becoming increasingly clear that job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation is not enough for employees to deliver the required work performance with an appropriate link to meeting organisational goals. In the last twenty years, employers' attention has shifted from creating conditions and incentive programs for workers so that they are satisfied with pay, benefits and working conditions to programs designed to ensure that workers are committed to the organisation and do not consider leaving it; and further to programs which objective was to ensure that employees are engaged at work, and also to reach the organisation mission (Horváthová et al., 2016).

3. Problem definition and methodology

The basic question of executing engagement in any organisation is knowing what engagement factors affect employee behaviour in such a way that these employees

really become engaged. In order to achieve desired level of engagement, a wide range of engagement factors can be used. The problematics of engagement has been researched by several companies, e.g. *Mercer*, *CIPD*, *Hay Group*, *Aon Hewitt*, *Gallup*, *Towers Watson*, *IES (Institute for Employment Studies)* and many others. Although each of these companies chose their own approach to define the factors of engagement, it can be found in close research that the results of their studies or research are very close. As it was already mentioned in the Introduction, none of these models included the specifications of Generation Y, who are people born between the years 1982 to 1995, and who currently influence the dynamics of labor market the most and also who will soon represent the dominant part of the labor market (Del Campo, 2011; Matusiková, 2011). According to the study of *Brookings Company* called *How Millennials Could Upend Wall Street and Corporate America*, representatives of this generation will account for about 75% of the global workforce in 2025 (Donston-Miller, 2016). This generation differs from previous generations, not only in relation to work, to money, to information technology, etc., but also to the engagement factors that affect this generation of workers. As stated by Zaniboni et al. (2013) and James et al. (2011), several studies have shown that age diversity affects factors that affect employee engagement and that these differences need to be considered.

3.1. The Aon Hewitt engagement model

Aon Hewitt's model, called *The Aon Hewitt Engagement Model*, we chose, as the initial model, to design a methodology for evaluating employee engagement, including the generation Y, by using methods of analysis, comparison and analogy (Aon Hewitt, 2017; Horváthová and Čopíková, 2017). The reason why we chose this model was the fact that, unlike the previous models of this or other companies, the aforementioned model includes not only the otherwise well-defined and otherwise, according to us, better structured groups of factors of engagement, but also, in particular, includes the business results deriving as a result of factors engagement and therefore higher levels of employee engagement. The results of this company's studies confirm that organisations with higher levels of engagement have better results in working with talent (retention, absenteeism and mental and physical health), operating (productivity and safety), customer satisfaction (satisfaction, loyalty and retention rates) and financial (revenue/revenue growth, operating income/margin and total return for shareholders).

The model identifies 6 sets of engagement factors, the implementation of which leads to an increase in performance and employee engagement. The individual groups of exposure factors are *Company Practices*, *The Basics*, *The Work*, *Performance*, *Leadership* and *Brand*, each of which includes individual engagement factors.

The initial model was modified and supplemented according to the opinions and experience of authors and according to the outputs of several studies dealing with the Y generation and was extended by other factors to include factors that also reflect the specificities of younger workers in the labor market, such as flexible working time, the use of state-of-the-art techniques and technologies, etc. (see Table 1 – additional factors are shown in italics). The pattern of the modified model has been verified and

Table 1. Modified engagement model.

Company Practices		The Basics		The Work		Performance		Leadership		Brand	
• open communication	• voluntary benefits	• job stability	• teamwork	• autonomy	• career opportunities	• senior leadership behavior of superiors	• reputation brand of the organisation				
• customer focus	• safety and health protection	• comfortable working environment	• interesting job assignments	• meaningful/stimulating work	• individual learning and development	• praise	• corporate social responsibility (CSR)				
• diversity and inclusion	• talent management	• work-life balance	• acceptable workload	• stimulating work	• performance management	• pleasant social environment	• convenient organisational culture				
• access to information	• modern technical equipment	• civic amenities in the vicinity of the workplace	• work on projects/abroad	• possibility of self-realisation	• people management	• just meaningful binding rules	• socially sustainable working environment				
• innovation	• acceptance of generational differences	• the workplace availability of worksite	• flexible working modes	• performance-related pay	• reward and recognition	• regular appraisal by the superior	• organisational values and behaviours				
• level of risk sharing				• objective performance appraisal	• giving feedback	• dialogue with the superior	• financial health				
					• related pay	• transfer and sharing knowledge and know-how	• organisation buildings = ecological buildings				

Source: Authors.

confirmed by the Focus Group's qualitative research method with the participation of 10 professionals (personnel and line managers) from practice.

Specific questionnaire based on the modified model was created in the next step (where the respondents identifiers were their age, gender and job position) which can be, using the Saaty's method of weight determination, practically used to determine the importance of the different sets of engagement factors and the importance of the individual engagement factors in the given set of engagement factors for employees, including employees of the Y generation. Using Saaty's method, the groups of engagement factors are compared first, followed by the individual engagement factors in these groups.

The questionnaire was filled individually by individual workers. The result of the elaboration and evaluation of questionnaires and utilisation of Saaty's method is the design of the model, e.g. model of engagement. For example, an organisation can create and then use a comprehensive engagement model for all workers in several ways. When applying the factors of engagement, it is possible to focus on one, the most important group of factors and use a number of factors from that group (use all the factors of the given group is unrealistic), or use more or all six groups of factors and then concentrate again on a certain number of factors. However, more appropriate option is the possibility to use several special models of engagement, especially for different groups of workers; based on identification data (gender, age, position), by second-level sorting it is possible to obtain detailed outputs for different groups of workers. Again, multiple variants can be selected as above. Of course, the proposed questionnaire, respectively can be further modified or supplemented according to the existing specifics of the particular organisation and its staff.

3.2. Saaty's method of determining weights

When creating a model of employee engagement, the quantitative pairwise comparison (i.e. Saaty's method) has been used. In this method, all pairs of criteria are compared and the evaluation is stored in a so-called Saaty's matrix $S = (s_{ij})$, when $i, j = 1, 2, \dots, k$. Elements of the matrix are interpreted as estimates of the proportion of weights of i th (w_i) and j th (w_j) criteria (Saaty, 2008):

$$s_{ij} \approx \frac{w_i}{w_j}; i, j = 1, 2, \dots, k \quad (1)$$

$$S_{ij} \in [1/9; 9]$$

The criteria comparison itself gives the preference, which is determined by certain amount of points from a chosen scale. The difference of this method lies in the fact that the assessor determines which criteria in a given pair is more important but also how many times it is more important. This allows the user to better specify preferences for individual criteria and to make the result of the final decision more exact (Zajarošová & Kauerová, 2014). For the pair-wise comparison the nine point scale is used.

When the intensity of importance is 1 (equal importance), it means that criteria i and j are equal; when the intensity is 3 (moderate importance) there is low preference

of criteria i before j ; when the intensity is 5 (strong importance), there is strong preference of criteria i before j ; when the intensity is 7 (very strong importance), there is very strong preference of criteria i before j ; when the intensity of importance is 9 (extreme importance), there is absolute preference of criteria i before j ; intensity 2 (equally to moderately) and intensity 4 (moderately to strong) and intensity 6 (strongly to very strong) and intensity 8 (very strong to extremely) are then medium values for more precise preference determination (Saaty, 1980).

Reasons for the selected range of a scale are the circumstances that all elements should be of the same order.

Matrix S is a square matrix of $n \times n$ order, for whose elements applies the following:

$$s_{ij} = 1/s_{ji}, \quad i, j = 1, 2, \dots, k. \quad (2)$$

Thus, matrix S is reciprocal. On the diagonal of matrix S , there is always value one (each criterion is equivalent to itself). Before counting the weight of individual criteria, it is necessary to verify if the specified matrix of paired comparisons is consistent. It is identified by the fact that there is no conflict in the task of the individual pairwise comparison. The degree of consistency can be assessed in various ways, one of them is, e.g. the consistency index defined as:

$$CI = \frac{(\lambda_{\max} - n)}{(n - 1)} \quad (3)$$

where λ_{\max} is the largest own number of matrix S and n is the number of criteria. Matrix S is consistent enough, if $CI < 0,1$ (Saaty & Vargas, 2012).

The calculation of weights from the Saaty's matrix can be done in several ways. The default (Saaty's) procedure is based on calculating the own vector of the matrix \mathbf{v} according to the formula:

$$\mathbf{S} \cdot \mathbf{v} = \lambda_{\max} \cdot \mathbf{v}. \quad (4)$$

One of the simpler, approximate and frequently used methods is to determine the weights using the weighted geometric mean of the rows of decision matrix S . We obtain approximate weights of w_i criteria by normalizing these averages (their division by the sum of these geometric means).

$$w_i = \frac{\left[\prod_{j=1}^k s_{ij} \right]^{\frac{1}{k}}}{\sum_{i=1}^k \left[\prod_{j=1}^k s_{ij} \right]^{\frac{1}{k}}} \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, k. \quad (5)$$

If matrix S is consistent, the difference between the weights determined by own v_i values and approximate weights of w_i obtained as the normalised geometric mean of rows of matrix S is minimal.

For further processing of the values obtained using the Saaty's method it was necessary to select an indicator to determine typical data values. These indicators are measures of central tendency, also known as the rate of value mean or level position. Indicators determine where on the number line, the sample is distributed. The best known indicators are arithmetic mean, median and mode (Mod(x)).

At that time, the value most frequently found in the given file (the value of the character with the highest relative frequency) was used in the resulting Saaty's tables, i.e. in the graphical representation of the distribution peak, i.e. Mod(x). It is, used most for categorical data and represents a typical value of the monitored file. Files here are the results (individual Saaty matrix) created by individuals in groups of workers by age. The advantage of Mod(x) is that its size is not affected by outlying observations. Another reason for choosing Mod(x) was the fact that it is easier to detect than other measures of central tendency, which is important for using the proposed model in practice (Friedrich, Hradecký, Michalcová, & Pomp, 2017).

4. Results: the case of Czech company

In order to meet the objectives of the pilot practical application of assessing the importance of employee engagement factors it was necessary to obtain primary data. These data were collected using the online questionnaire survey based on the aforementioned questionnaire. Data collection took place in June 2018.

The basic set was all 843 employees of one large enterprise (over 250 employees) of the Moravian-Silesian region operating, according to the CZ-NACE classification, in manufacturing. All employees were asked to fill in the questionnaire through the HR department. The return rate was 78.8%; the total number of respondents who completed the questionnaire was 664 workers. The results were elaborated only on the basis of respondents' age (further indicators such as gender and job position were not in this case study used). Of this 664 workers, 24.4% (162 workers) were 55–73 years old, 45.8% (304 workers) were 38–54 years old, 28.6% (190 workers) were aged 24–37 and 1.2% (8 workers) were 9–23 years old. The division of workers into groups by age was based on the generally known sociological classification of people into individual generations.

Result of the processing of 664 completed questionnaires and the use of the Saaty's method, are 4 models of engagement for each age group separately. However, in the following text, all the results for the largest group of employees, that is, the group of workers aged 24–37 (generation Y) will be presented as an only example that is due to the large range of outputs. Summary results for the second largest group of employees, that is the group of workers aged 38–54 (generation X) are then mentioned in the discussion.

4.1. Evaluation of the engagement group factors' importance

Saaty's matrix is presented in Table S1 (see Appendix, [supplementary material](#)). As the most important group of engagement factors all respondents aged 24–37 consider

the group *The Work*, which reached the significance level of 38.35%. As the least important all respondents marked the group *Brand* with significance level 3.80%.

4.2. Evaluation of the engagement group factors' importance in individual factor groups

The most important factor in the *The Work* group all respondents aged 24–37 consider the *Meaningful/Stimulation work*, which reached the significance level of 28.15%; as the least important, all respondents rated *Autonomy* with a weight of 2.52%. Paired comparisons of engagement factors in the group *The Work* are presented in Table S2 (see Appendix, [supplementary material](#)).

The most important factor in the *The Basics* group is the *Job stability* with a weight of 30.77%; as the least important factor in the *Basics* group, all respondents aged 24–37 consider the *Civic amenities in the vicinity of the workplace* which reached the level of 2.08%. Paired comparisons of engagement factors in the group *The Basics* are presented in Table S3 (see Appendix, [supplementary material](#)).

As the most important factor in the *Performance* group all respondents aged 24–37 consider the *performance-related pay*, which reached the level of significance of 20.56%; as the least important factor in the *Performance* factor group, all respondents consider *Performance Management* with a weight of 3.02%. Paired comparisons of engagement factors in the group *Performance* are presented in Table S4 (see Appendix, [supplementary material](#)).

All respondents aged 24–37 consider the most important factor in the *Leadership* group the *Senior Leadership*, it has reached the level of significance of 28.48%, with the highest ranking factor being the *Behaviour of Superiors* with a weight of 21.19%; the least important factor is the *Regular appraisal by the superior* with low level of significance 2.45%. Paired comparisons of engagement factors in group *Leadership* are presented in Table S5 (see Appendix, [supplementary material](#)).

All respondents aged 24–37 consider as the most important factor in the *Company Practices* group the *open communication* factor, which reached the level of significance of 32.42%; as the least important, all respondents consider the *Level of risk sharing* with a weight of 2.37%. Paired comparisons of engagement factors in the group *Company Practices* are presented in Table S6 (see Appendix, [supplementary material](#)).

As the most important factor in the group *Brand* all respondents aged 24–37 consider the *Organisational values and behaviours* which reached the level of significance of 27.73%; As the least important factor are considered the *Organisation buildings = ecological buildings* with a weight of 3.49%. Paired comparisons of engagement factors in the group *Brand* are presented in Table S7 (see Appendix, [supplementary material](#)).

The result of processing the outputs mentioned in chapters 4.1 and 4.2 is the aggregate model of engagement, i.e. the alignment of all six groups of engagement factors and individual engagement factors in each engagement group according to the importance from the most important group or the most important factor to the least

important group or the least important factor, also for a group of workers within the age between 24 and 37, i.e. generation Y (see [Table 2](#)).

In the same way the summary model for the second largest group of workers aged 38–54 (generation X, see [Table 3](#)) was created and also for the leftover two groups, that is for group of workers aged 55–73 (generation Baby Boomers) and aged 24–37 (generation Z).

In order to support the growth of workers engagement the organisation can then select several variants of procedure. First variant is the possibility, where in each group of engagement factors the organisation focuses only on the engagement factor which has been considered by the respondents as the most important (see [Table 4](#)).

Or the organisation can chose the second option and concentrate only on one, the most important group of factors for workers, which according to the research is the group *The Work*, and, for example, the company may apply only the first two or three other key factors of engagement to support engagement growth ([Table 5](#)).

Before applying chosen engagement factors, a survey of the current level of employee engagement should be conducted in the organisation. Then its evaluation should be compared with another identical survey of the engagement level, which should be carried out after, for example, the two-year application of the chosen engagement factors in the organisation. Only by comparing the two outcomes it will be possible to verify the correctness of the implementation of the chosen strategy for increasing the involvement of the employees in the organisation.

5. Discussion

Based on the analysis of the practical implementation results of the new way of evaluating the importance of employees' engagement factors including the generation Y within the company in the Czech Republic and the case study, it is possible to focus on two areas corresponding to the formulated scientific hypothesis. (1) The first is concerned with the differences in the perception of the importance of groups of engagement factors and the individual engagement factors of the Y and X generations. (2) The second is concerned with the evaluation of the importance of the individual engagement factors added as specific to the Y generation by this generation compared to the X generation. (3) The third area for discussion, which, however, is no longer in the context of formulated scientific hypothesis but is a prerequisite for the application of the proposed engagement factors and thereby ensuring the growth of employee engagement in the organisation, appears to define roles and accountability of stakeholders, personnel department, line managers and top management of the organisation.

(1) By comparing the significance groups of engagement factors of generations X and Y, i.e. by comparing [Tables 2](#) and [3](#), we find that the order of importance of factor groups for generations Y and X is identical in only two out of six cases, in the remaining four cases the order varies; two of these differences are in the range of 3 levels of importance, two in the range of 1 level of importance (see [Table 6](#)). Hypothesis 1 is hereby confirmed. Differences of 3 levels of significance can be seen in the *Performance* factor group, where this group is, more important for the Y

Table 2. Aggregate engagement model for generation Y.

1. <i>The Work</i>	2. <i>The Basics</i>	3. <i>Performance</i>	4. <i>Leadership</i>	5. <i>Company Practices</i>	6. <i>Brand</i>
1. meaningful/ stimulating work	1. job stability	1. performance-related pay	1. senior leadership	1. open communication	1. organisational values and behaviours
2. teamwork	2. comfortable working environment	2.-3. career opportunities	2. behaviour of superior/ superiors	2. access to information	2. convenient
3. possibility of self-realisation	3. work-life balance	2.-3. individual learning and development	3. just meaningful binding rules	3. talent management	3. organisational culture
4. interesting job assignments	4. voluntary benefits	4. objective performance appraisal	4. praise	4. customer focus	3. brand of the organisation
5. flexible working modes	5. modern technical equipment	5. reward and recognition	5. dialogue with the superior	5. innovation	4. reputation
6. acceptable workload	6. safety and health protection	6. giving feedback	6. pleasant social environment	6. diversity and inclusion differences	5. financial health of the organisation
7. work on projects/abroad	7. availability of worksite	7. people management	7. transfer and knowledge and know-how	7. acceptance of generational differences	6. corporate social responsibility (CSR)
8. autonomy	8. civic amenities in the vicinity of the workplace	8. performance management	8. regular appraisal by the superior	8. level of risk sharing	7. socially sustainable working environment
					8. organisation buildings = ecological buildings

Source: Authors.

Table 3. Aggregate engagement model for generation X.

1. The Work		2. The Basics		3. Brand		4. Leadership		5. Performance		6. Company Practices	
1. meaningful/ stimulating work		1. job stability		1. convenient		1. behaviour of superior/ superiors		1. performance-related pay		1. acceptance of generational differences	
2. flexible working modes		2. work-life balance		2. organisational culture		2. senior leadership		2. objective performance		2. level of risk sharing	
3. acceptable workload		3. voluntary benefits		3. organisational values and behaviours		3. pleasant social environment		3. reward and recognition		3. customer focus	
4. autonomy		4. comfortable working environment		3. reputation		4. dialogue with the superior		4. people management		4. open communication	
5. interesting job assignments		5. safety and health protection		4. brand of the organisation		5. praise		5. career opportunities		5. innovation	
6. possibility of self-realisation		6. civic amenities in the vicinity of the workplace		5. corporate social responsibility (CSR)		6. just meaningful binding rules		6. individual learning and development		6. access to information	
7. teamwork		7. modern technical equipment		6. financial health of the organisation		7. regular appraisal by the superior		7. giving feedback		7. talent management	
8. work on projects/abroad		8. availability of worksite		7. socially sustainable working environment		8. transfer and sharing knowledge and know-how		8. performance management		8. diversity and inclusion	
				8. organisation buildings = ecological buildings							

Source: Authors.

Table 4. The most important factors in individual groups for generation Y.

Group of factors	Factor	weight
<i>Company practices</i>	open communication	32.42%
<i>The Basics</i>	job stability	30.77%
<i>The Work</i>	meaningful/stimulating work	28.15%
<i>Performance</i>	performance-related pay	20.56%
<i>Leadership</i>	senior leadership	28.48%
<i>Brand</i>	organisational values and behaviours	27.73%

Source: Authors.

Table 5. The most important group of factors The Work with factors arranged according to importance for generation Y.

Group of factors <i>The Work</i>	Weight
factors	
meaningful/stimulating work	28.15%
teamwork	20.36%
possibility of self-realisation	17.35%
interesting job assignments	11.34%
flexible working modes	10.69%
acceptable workload	05.51%
work on projects/abroad	04.07%
autonomy	02.52%

Source: Authors.

generation than for the X generation and the *Brand* factor group, where this group of factors is, more important for the X generation than for the Y generation. *Leadership*, where this group is more important for generation Y than for generation X and for the Group of Factors *Company Practices*, where this group is more important for generation X than for generation Y. The identified larger differences are, in the authors' opinion, expected and explained, young people tend to be more focused on well-valued, high-performance, more "ferocious" and more active, wanting to grow and educate quickly, have good leadership and work in a comfortable work environment, while the older generation wants to work in an organisation that has the same value setting, Behaviour in an organisation that has a positive reputation, it accepts generational differences, places an acceptable level of risk sharing on employees, and is focused on customers. However, it is only the personal opinion of the authors, which should be confirmed, modified or refuted by further, by more detailed study, which seems to be a suggestion for research in this area.

By comparing the assessment of the importance of engagement within the groups of engagement of the Y and X generations, again by comparing [Tables 2](#) and [3](#), we find that the most important factor in each group of engagement is identical in three cases to the generations Y and X (*The Work*, *The Basics*, and *Performance factors* and meaningful/stimulating work, job stability and performance-related pay factors, they slightly differ in the *Leadership* group (for generation X, the most important factor is the behaviour of superior/superiors that ranked in generation Y second, when the most important factor for this generation is senior leadership). Also, there is only a slight difference in the preferences of the two generations for the *Brand* group (for generation X, the most important factor is the convenient organisational culture, ranking second in generation Y, with the most important factor for this generation

Table 6. The differences in the ranking of engagement factor's group importance.

Group of factors	Ranking for Generation Y	Ranking for Generation X	Difference [amount]
<i>The Work</i>	1.	1.	–
<i>The Basics</i>	2.	2.	–
<i>Performance</i>	3.	6.	3
<i>Leadership</i>	4.	5.	1
<i>Company Practices</i>	5.	4.	1
<i>Brand</i>	6.	3.	3

Source: Authors.

being organisational values and behaviours). Larger differences can be observed in the Group of Factors of *Company Practices*, where the generation X most favoured factor (acceptance of generational differences) was ranked seventh in generation Y; and vice versa, when the most preferred factor (open communication) for generation X was ranked fourth. Again, the reasons for this should be confirmed, modified or refuted by further, by more detailed study, which seems to be a suggestion for research in this area.

In light of the above case study findings in a particular company in the Czech Republic and considering the fact that there are differences between generations in the perception of the importance of engagement groups and individual engagement factors, we can recommend the following practice: if it decides to use the first option outlined in Chapter 4 to support the growth of employee engagement (i.e. to focus on only one of the most important engagement factors in each group of engagement that was considered most relevant in the group by the age group), for generation Y concentrate on these specific engagement factors: open communication, job stability meaningful/stimulating work, performance-related pay, senior leadership and organisational values and behaviours (see Table 4). For generation X, then the organisation should focus on the following specific engagement factors: meaningful/stimulating work, convenient organisational structure, job stability, acceptance of generational differences, performance-related pay and behaviour of superior/superiors. (2) If the second option outlined in Chapter 4 is definitely to be used to support the growth of employee engagement (hence focusing on only one, the most important group of engagement factors, in our case *The Work*, which is the same generation for the organisation) Y and X generation, and within this group of engagement factors, focus only on the three engagement factors identified by the age groups as the most important), then focus on the following specific engagement factors: meaningful/stimulating work, teamwork, possibility of self-realisation, flexible working modes, and acceptable workload (see Table 5).

(2) Comparing the assessment of the importance of engagement factors supplemented as specific to generation Y, i.e. comparing Tables 1 (added factors are shown in italics), 2 and 3, we find that generation Y ranks 8 of the 27 added factors among the 18 most important factors of involvement (we always consider 3 factors from each group of factors). For generation X, there are even 13 such factors, which can be understood as a surprising finding, given that the added factors have been identified as specific for generation Y. We therefore reject hypothesis 2. Finding out the causes of this situation would require further, more detailed analysis, which again appears as another possible suggestion for research in this area.

Since the survey has been done only in one company and in one industry, we can't provide some general conclusions pertaining to the application of individual specific engagement group factors or individual engagement factors, however we can formulate general conclusion pertaining to the proposed way how to evaluate the importance of employees' engagement factors. Since this procedure is based on improved existing model by adding additional factors specific for generation Y, it can be used in any type of organisation, může být použit v jakémkoli typu organizace, naturally, considering the choice of a specific variant of its application according to the specific organisation and their staff. This can be considered as a practical value of the paper.

(3) Regarding the definition of roles and the determination of the responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in the application of the proposed engagement factors, thereby ensuring the growth of employee engagement, surely it would be a mistake to think that the growth of engagement will be made by the HR department. The Personnel Unit can help raise managers' engagement rates, but in no way can they manage it alone. From the outset, there must be a partnership between HR departments, senior executives and senior management. Top management cannot expect a change that is not actively and consistently supported. If an organisation wants to have a high degree of engagement, the impulse of change must come from above and the top and line managers must provide an example in their own behaviour and also they must know what is expected of them. It is not possible for senior management to meet with workers and discuss with them the day-to-day problems or other operational matters. Their task is to ensure clear communication about the vision, mission and values of the organisation, and to create an appropriate culture of organisation.

Line managers play a major role in increasing employee engagement. In their day-to-day contact with their subordinates, they can support behaviour that leads to increased engagement and thus, the performance of their subordinates by their behaviour (Birknerová, Frankovský, Zbihlejšová, & Birkner, 2016; CLC., 2004; Drakulevski, 2016).

The basic tools with which managers and top management of the organisation can work appropriately and thus stimulate employee engagement include the following:

- quality line management – there are managers in the organisation who take care of their employees, inform them, treat them fairly, encourage them to quality work, are interested in their career growth, help them find and exploit opportunities for learning and development;
- two-way, open communication – enabling workers to express ideas and suggest better ways to do something, as well as to inform them about things that are relevant to them (including the relationship between individual jobs and the wider business area of the organisation);
- effective collaboration within the organisation – among different departments and functions, as well as between management and trade unions;
- focus on staff development – to make workers feel that organisations value their worth in the long run; provides them both with the training they need to do their current work and with fair access to development opportunities;

- the commitment of the organisation to ensure the wellbeing of workers – real care for the health and safety of workers demonstrated, for example, by minimizing accidents, injuries, violence and harassment and taking action in the event of such problems;
- clear, accessible policies and practices of the HR department – to which both line managers and senior managers are committed, especially in terms of staff appraisal, ensuring equal opportunities and friendliness;
- fairness in relation to material remuneration and employee benefits – in terms of ensuring internal and external justice;
- harmonious working environment – supporting workers to respect and help others (Horváthová et al., 2016).

The application of these tools to the organisation should lead to the desired increase in engagement and hence performance of the organisation, as demonstrated, for example, by a study conducted by the company *IES (Institute for Employment Studies)* (IES, 2004).

6. Conclusion

As stated above, engagement has a direct impact on both, the performance of the staff and the performance of the organisation and hence, its financial performance. Managers should be aware that engagement not only has to be measured, but the measurement results should be quickly integrated into the management of the organisation so that the increase in employee engagement would bring a competitive advantage (Horváthová & Mikušová, 2012). In the case of low employee engagement, it holds true that the sooner we know its “symptoms”, the earlier it will be possible to start treatment and deploy the right “cure” (Mikušová & Čopíková, 2016). Therefore, it is important to monitor employee engagement in time.

If the organisation decides, for its demonstrable benefits, to apply the concept of engagement, in the first stage, it is necessary to identify which factors influence the engagement of workers and what implementation can lead to increased employee engagement. The ability to get this information about preferred engagement factors can be a survey among workers, for example by using a questionnaire that was designed by the authors of this article, based on the modification and addition of existing engagement.

Aim of this article was to introduce the new way how to evaluate the importance of employees’ engagement factors including the generation Y and provides the results of practical implementation of pilot research. The methods used to fulfil the aim were the modification and addition of already existing engagement model, which, however, does not reflect the differences of young employees on the labor market, and also Saaty’s method of determining weights. To fulfil the objectives, the authors have executed a survey by using the written questionnaire on a sample size of 664 respondents. Main outputs of the article include proposal of adjusted engagement model, questionnaire used to evaluate the importance of engagement’s factors and

with pilot practical application of evaluating of the engagement's factors of employees in a selected company.

Limitations of the research may lie the subjectivity of the respondent's views when comparing groups of engagement factors and individual engagement factors, as well as on the number of organisations and respondents and type of organisation in which the research was conducted. All respondents were from the manufacturing industry, which also brings some limitations for generalisation and use in other branches.

Suggestion for future research in this area is to find a new, simpler method for factors classification than Saaty's method on which the proposed way of engagement factors evaluation is based, that is due to the fact that some respondents found this method too complicated. In addition, research in this field could concern, for example, the extension of the survey to the manufacturing industry throughout the Czech Republic or focusing on other sectors of the economy. Further, already mentioned in the discussion chapter, suggestions for research into this area could be finding out the reasons of different values of engagement group factors, that is apart from the group *The Work* and *The Basic* (which ranked for both the Generation X and Generation Y at the same position of importance), finding the reasons of high ranking added factors importance, which are specific for Generation Y and Generation X or finding the reasons of quite different ranking of factors importance in the factors group *Company Practices* by generation Y and X.

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